

The Year in Review

1997 has been a busy year for the NJLA Reference Section. The Section's NJLA Spring 1997 workshop, titled Technical Trouble Shooting in Reference, was well attended. The Electronic Management Survey - designed to survey how libraries handle electronic resources management - was distributed at the conference, and results were posted in the following edition of The Point of Reference.

The survey revealed that when libraries were asked "who maintains your computer systems," most respondents said they manage them "themselves," closely followed by "contracting or consulting with someone else to troubleshoot or maintain them."

The Reference Section was also a co-sponsor with the Automated Services Section at the Somerset County Library in Bridgewater for the Fall 1997 workshop Driving through Internet Chaos: Search Engines to the Rescue. The speakers were Ka-Neng Au, the Systems/Business Librarian at the Dana Library of Rutgers - Newark, and Nancy Picchi, the computer coordinator at Bernardsville Public Library. Nancy described the differences and advantages assorted search engines, where search strategies that work in some search engines, did not work in others. Ka Neng Au focused on features that can help users find new material, along with describing some internet resource guides, and WWW reviewing sources.

Online Telephone and Address Directories

Big Yellow (made by Bell Atlantic Electronic Commerce Services), regards themselves as "America's national Yellow Pages," claiming to be able to "find over 100 million U.S. residential listings." I put Big Yellow's product, Find People (<http://bigyellow.four11.com/cgi-bin/Four11Main?fonesearch>), through the test.

A patron at our library here in Morristown was trying to find the complete address and phone number for an individual living in rural Pennsylvania. We typed in the first and last name of the person, and we happened to know the town too, so we inserted that also. And everything we desired we found !

One word of warning. I entered my family name to see what comes up in the database, and the information posted in Big Yellow was nearly fifteen years out of date ! I tried the same at other services, like Yahoo's PeopleSearch (<http://yahoo.four11.com>), and People Finder by Excite (<http://www.excite.com/Reference/people.html>), and they also came up with the same erroneous data ! Other search engines (see following article) have similar services, and there are also web sites that also work this way, like PeopleFinder (<http://www.databaseamerica.com/html/gpfind.htm>) and Switchboard (<http://www.switchboard.com>).

So, the important lessons I learned from this were: be sure to double and triple check my all resources, and, if the results of a search seem questionable, they may be wrong !

A Guide to Finding Things on the Internet

If you're ready to plunge into the Web, here are three ways to find what you want:

The most accessible tool for the Web novice is a subject directory, like Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>). Yahoo really isn't a search engine, although it is often lumped together with them. Great for general searches, such as information on the American Civil War. Because people sort the sites for you, the selected sites are more likely to zero in on your topic.

Basic Search Engines

A basic search engine gives you a larger universe of sites to view. If you are doing a specific search, (something about Hercules, rather than Roman mythology) try a basic engine:

Alta Vista	http://www.altavista.digital.com
Excite	http://www.excite.com
HotBot	http://www.hotbot.com
Infoseek	http://www.infoseek.com
Lycos	http://www.lycos.com
Northern Light	http://www.nlsearch.com
Open Text Index	http://index.opentext.net
WebCrawler	http://webcrawler.com

Meta-Engines

Some meta-engines submit your search terms to several or all major search engines simultaneously. Others just post lists of search engines. Be careful; complex searches that require Boolean logic and those that require operators are better done one engine at a time.

All-in-One	http://www.albany.net/allinone
Beaucoup	http://www.beaucoup.com
Dogpile	http://www.dogpile.com
Euroseek	http://www.euroseek.com
MetaCrawler	http://www.metacrawler.com
MetaSearch	http://metasearch.com

Considering that the retrieval of search engines is so huge, it is important to refer to more specialized resources. Yahoo is one of many sources that has lengthy lists of more specialized search options. The following is a brief list of Internet databases that review and rate Web sites and pages:

IWeb	http://sparta.lcs.mit.edu/iweb/welcome.html
JumpCity	http://www.jumpcity.com/
NetGuide Live	http://www.netguide.com/

IRS Form and Publication Availability

Forms and publications are also available by phone (1-800-TAX-FORM), at local IRS offices, many Post Offices and some libraries, and by computer:

- * WWW: http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/forms_pubs/index.html
- * TELNET: [iris.irs.ustreas.gov](telnet://iris.irs.ustreas.gov)
- * FTP: [ftp.fedworld.gov/pub/](ftp://ftp.fedworld.gov/pub/)
- * If you have a fax modem and fax software you can access IRS TaxFax through your personal computer. Use the following fax number: (703) 368-9694

Finding New York State and Pennsylvania tax forms

Try these automated information system phone numbers for tax information in New York State and Pennsylvania. The web addresses indicated can also get you to the online tax-oriented database for each states. Both web sites require a program like Adobe Acrobat for the viewing and printing of the tax forms and publications.

New York State Tax Department-Taxpayer Assistance Bureau
(1-800-225-5829)
<http://www.tax.state.ny.us>

Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
1-888-PATAxes(1-888-728-2937)
<http://www.revenue.state.pa.us>

Unclaimed Property in the State of New Jersey ?!?

Yes, there is office in the state government that addresses unclaimed property. The Unclaimed Properties general information number is (609) 292-9200. The State of New Jersey does not give specific claim information over the phone. All claim inquiries must be in writing and include the following information:

1. The name of the reported owner of the property as it appears in the original document.
2. Known address(es) in New Jersey.
3. The name of who reported the Unclaimed Property (If known).
4. The account or property identifier if known.
5. Social Security Number of the owner(s) of the property.
6. A phone number where someone can be reached during the day if additional information is required.
7. Name of person making the inquiry (If different than reported owner)

DO NOT SEND ANY ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS WITH YOUR INITIAL INQUIRY

Please send the above information to the following address:

State of New Jersey
Unclaimed Property
PO Box 214
Trenton, NJ 08646-0214
Attention: Claims Section

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ucpfaq.htm>

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In this Issue...

- The Year in Review
- Search Engines and Meta-Engines
- Unclaimed Property in the State of New Jersey
- Tax Publication Information: New York and Pennsylvania
- Electronic Telephone and Address Directories - Exposed !

Point of Reference

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